

Facing Takeoff: A first step approach to overcoming flight anxiety

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Aviation Studies
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Objective

In order to address flight related anxiety, a partnership was formed between Nationwide Children's Hospital, the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, and the Center for Aviation Studies, to develop a workshop offering combined in-depth, behind the scenes information, unique access, gradual exposure and support.

Held at John Glenn International Airport, participants work with aviation and mental health professionals to learn valuable strategies to help them identify and address flight anxiety.

Need

"According to some estimates, as many as 25 percent of all Americans suffer some nervousness about flying, cites Rick Seaney, CFO of flightaware.com; but the National Institute of Mental Health says this fear, usually called aviophobia, affects just 6.5 percent of the population." That's more than 20 million people!

<http://abcnews.go.com/Travel/fear-flying-good-things/story?id=20471481>

Study Background

A variety of research has indicated that flying related anxiety is highly prevalent within the general population, with yearly prevalence estimates ranging from 2.5% to as high as 40%. The disparity between these upper and lower prevalence estimates may be explained by the fact that lower estimates are associated with research aiming to identify clinically significant phobia whilst higher estimates may be indicative of studies which describe individuals with a self-identified fear of flying.

Processes Contributing to the Maintenance of Flying Phobia: A Narrative Review
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4887486/>

The Collaboration

John Glenn International

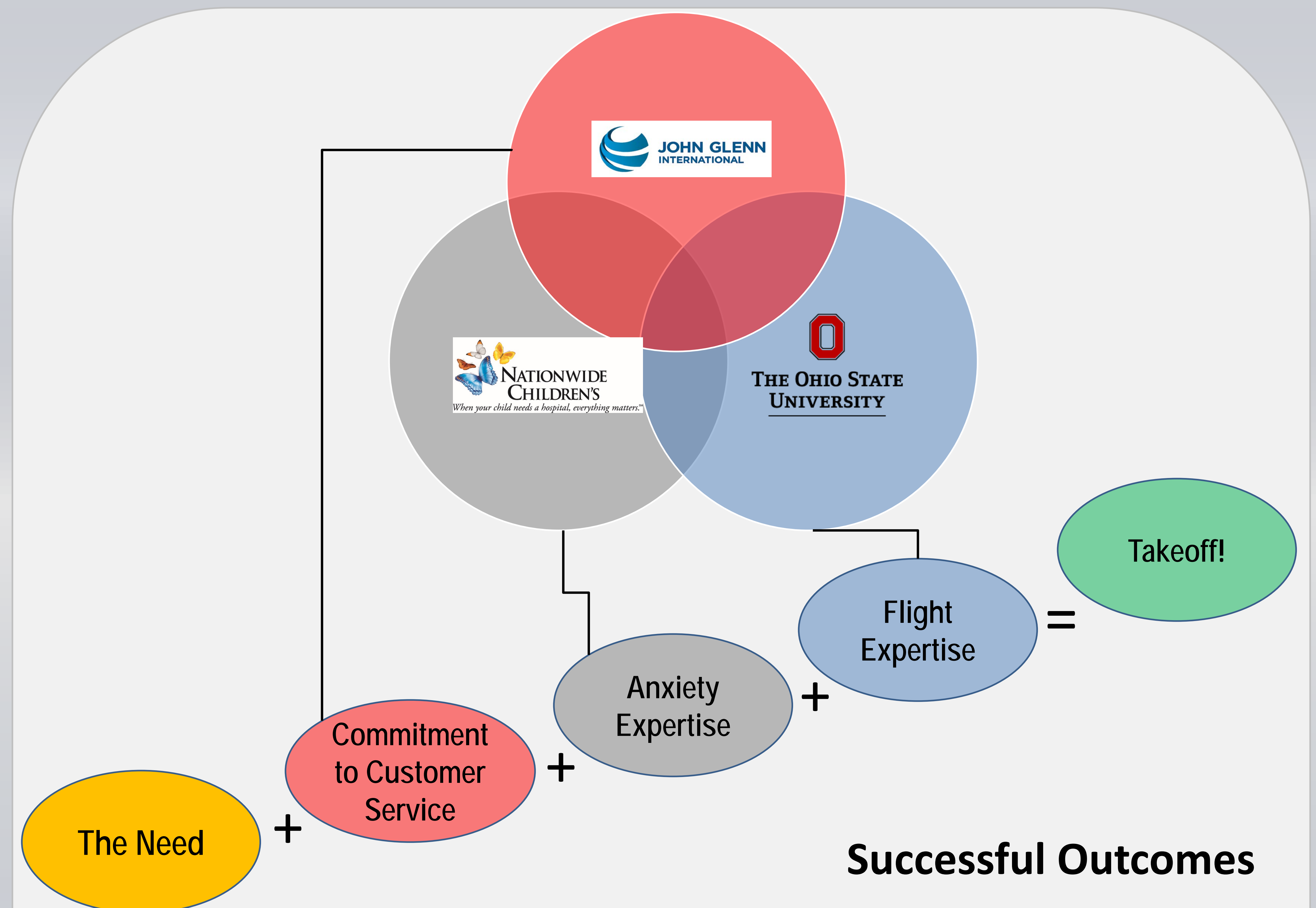
Key customer service personnel have recognized the need for both first time and repeat fliers experiencing flight anxiety to have a supportive venue to receive assistance. They are committed to the highest level of customer care and have established the foundation of the collaborative by developing the curriculum outline, engaging the partners, supporting the program content, hosting the workshop and facility tour, workshop participant communications, coordination, and customer experience follow-up as needed.

Nationwide Children's Hospital

Mental Health professionals experienced in working with children and adults who deal with significant anxiety, lead discussions about the nature of flight anxiety and how to face it rather than avoid it. They facilitate supportive exposure to the airport site and the experience of preparing to go on a flight. Participants are guided in learning about strategies that are available to help them tolerate and overcome their anxiety and move toward experiencing excitement about flying.

The Ohio State University

Highly trained pilots and aviation experts from the Center for Aviation Studies provide extensive information on the nature of flying and flight safety. They are available to respond to any and all questions to help allay participants fears arising from the unknown or unexpected things they anticipate could occur.



Many individuals, couples and families have expressed a desire for assistance to help overcome their fear of flying. To date, five workshops have been conducted for a total of 64 participants. With 145 people on the wait list, six additional workshops have been planned to accommodate interested participants.

"The trip was phenomenal. All of the flights went well and I went through security check points, customs, and immigration confidently! I returned home Friday evening. I am already planning my next mission trip. Words cannot express my gratitude for what all of you involved in the workshop gave to me by helping me conquer my fears."

*"I tell you, Saturday, I was ready to fly!
I honestly think I could've done it right then and there."*